

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 25-29 and 35 are pending. Claims 7-24 and 30-34 were previously cancelled. By this Amendment, claims 1-6 and 25 are cancelled and claims 26-29 are amended. No new matter is introduced in this Amendment.

Rejection Over Harris et al. Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-6, 25, 27-29, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,858,095 to Harris et al. (Harris et al.). By this amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-6 and 25. Claims 27-29 now depend from amended claim 26, which was amended to address the Examiner's objection and it is now submitted that claims 27-29 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner's rejection of claim 35 is respectfully traversed. It is submitted that Harris et al. does not establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation because it does not disclose a flexible tubular element as required by claim 35. As such, it is submitted that claim 35 is in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 35 over Harris et al.

Rejection Over Winterer et al. Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-6, 25, 27-29, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,810,323 to Winterer et al. (Winterer et al.). By this amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-6 and 25. Claims 27-29 now depend from amended claim 26, which was amended to address the Examiner's objection and it is now submitted that claims 27-29 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner's rejection of claim 35 is respectfully traversed. It is submitted that Winterer et al. does not establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation because it does not

disclose a flexible tubular element as required by claim 35. As such, it is submitted that claim 35 is in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 35 over Winterer et al.

Allowable Subject Matter

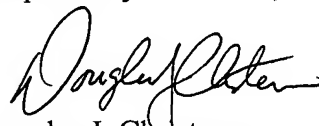
Claim 26 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this amendment, applicant has amended claim 26 to incorporate all of the limitations of claim 25 and it is now submitted that claim 26 is in condition for allowance. Claims 27-29 have also been amended to now depend from allowable claim 26 and it is now submitted that claims 27-29 are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas J. Christensen
Registration No. 35,480

Customer No. 24113
Patterson, Thunte, Skaar & Christensen, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2100
Telephone: (612) 349-3001